

VZCZCXRO7908  
OO RUEHBI RUEHLMC  
DE RUEHLM #1601/01 3321338  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 281338Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7263  
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0564  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7551  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5718  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4153  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1603  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 8145  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5734  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2475  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 COLOMBO 001601

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS AND PM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/14/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CE](#)  
SUBJECT: LTTE CHIEF SAYS INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY  
RESPONSIBLE FOR FAILURE OF PEACE EFFORTS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires James R. Moore. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In his annual "Heroes' Day" speech, LTTE supremo Prabhakaran reiterated his litany of charges against the majority Sinhalese community in Sri Lanka. However, Prabhakaran went further than he has before in condemning what he sees as the international community's passivity in the face of increasingly aggressive actions of the current government. About an hour before the speech, the Sri Lankan Air Force bombed the radio transmitter "Voice of Tigers" in an apparent attempt to block the broadcast of the speech and possibly to kill Prabhakaran. International journalist organizations condemned the air raid as a violation of the international rules of war. In Embassy's estimate, the speech could help to rally Tamils in Sri Lanka and the Diaspora to the Tigers' cause. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Prabhakaran spared no one in his annual "Heroes' Day" speech -- other than the fallen Tiger war heroes he praised. (Note: the complete text of the speech is available on Tamilnet.com.) As in years past, he reviewed the history of the conflict, noting the failure of successive Sinhalese-dominated governments to offer an acceptable political settlement to the Tamil community. "None of the Southern parties are ready to accept the core principles for a lasting peace: the Tamil homeland, the Tamil nation and the Tamil right to self-determination." He condemned the present government as "genocidal." He called the efforts of the All-Party Representative Committee (APRC) to develop a devolution proposal "a smokescreen over the misery that (the government's) military adventures are creating in the Tamil homeland and to deceive other governments to get their aid and support."

¶3. (SBU) His message to the international community was equally blunt: stop propping up the "Sinhala state." He argued that economic and military assistance to Sri Lanka should end. He was particularly caustic in his assessment of the failures of the Norwegian mediators, the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission, the Co-Chairs, and India to bring about an end to the conflict through meaningful negotiations. "By only paying lip-service to peace the international community has contributed to the killing of an extraordinary son of our nation, Tamilchelvan... The Co-Chairs, acting as guardians

of the peace process, have failed in their responsibility... What exactly is the purpose of their meeting from time to time in different places. Is it their intent to assist the Sinhala regime to wipe out the Tamils?"

#### ATTACK ON TIGER RADIO TRANSMISSION FACILITY

-----

¶4. (SBU) The Sri Lankan Air Force bombed the LTTE radio station "Voice of Tigers" shortly before Prabhakaran was due to give his November 27 "Heroes' Day" speech. The pro-LTTE website Tamilnet said that twelve bombs had struck the site. The Sri Lankan military confirmed the raid. The broadcast continued though a backup transmitter, but the speech could not be monitored in Colombo. (The speech was available on the internet in English and Tamil within minutes.) The LTTE Peace Secretariat said that all the buildings at the site had been flattened and claimed five radio station employees and four bystanders near the site had been killed.

¶5. (SBU) Defense Secretary Gothabaya Rajapaksa told the news agency AFP on November 26, "The killing of Tamilchelvam sent a very powerful message: they know we have good intelligence on their movements." Noting that it was Prabhakaran's 53rd birthday, Rajapaksa said that if all goes to plan it will be his last. "We are after him. We are specifically targeting their leadership... For the last few months he has been even more restricted in his movements. We want to keep the pressure on. We are gathering intelligence, information." A military spokesman confirmed to us privately that the Air Force had targeted Prabhakaran specifically in the raid.

¶6. (SBU) The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)

COLOMBO 00001601 002 OF 003

criticized the attack on the radio transmitter, saying that it was a non-military target: "While the IFJ does not endorse or support the views of any particular media organization, we maintain that all media should be treated as non-combatants," IFJ President Christopher Warren said. "The journalists at the VOT are unarmed citizens and thus should not be considered military targets under any circumstances." Reporters without Borders went further, saying "the rules of war are clear - military bombardment and bombing must be limited to strictly military targets. The government in Colombo uses the Geneva Conventions to condemn LTTE crimes but forgets the conventions when it bombs what is a civilian installation and therefore protected by the conventions."

#### COLLATERAL DAMAGE TO UN

-----

¶7. (C) United Nations resident representative Neil Buhne told us that at about 4:30 p.m., an SLAF bomb landed within about 200 to 500 meters of the building housing the World Food Program and OCHA offices in Kilinochchi. While no one was hurt, because all employees had moved to an air raid shelter, all the windows were blown out, the suspended ceiling in five rooms collapsed and a large piece of shrapnel landed in the office. Buhne communicated his concern to government ministers and to Chief of Defense Forces Donald Perera. Perera asked for the coordinates of all UN offices. Buhne believed that the UN had previously shared these, but communicated them again. He noted that the WFP building roof was painted with UN symbols.

¶8. (SBU) An LTTE spokesman accused a Sri Lankan Army Deep Penetration Unit (DPU) of blowing up a bus 25 kilometers west of Kilinochchi on November 27, killing 11 children, the driver, and an accompanying adult. The children were reportedly traveling to a cemetery for a ceremony to honor slain Tamil Tiger fighters. The military denied having any forces in the area.

#### REACTIONS

-----

¶9. (SBU) A well-known businessman and a respected Hindu priest, both from Jaffna, separately called the political section to register their reactions to the speech. In their view, the ball was now in the court of the Co-Chairs, India and other international players. They appealed to the international community to protect the Tamils by helping to find a solution. The publisher of the largest circulation chain of Tamil newspapers in Sri Lanka told us that the speech showed that Prabhakaran clearly wants the international community to change its policy in order to save Tamil culture and the Tamil people.

¶10. (C) Defense analyst Iqbal Athas told us that the two incidents, the rebel claim that a long-range reconnaissance patrol targeted a vehicle carrying school children, and the air raid on the Voice of Tigers station, would accelerate the trend toward increased violence. He thought revenge attacks by the Tigers were not far off. Prabhakaran biographer and expert on the Tamil Tigers M.R. Narayan Swamy told us the speech was "the cry of a man in distress, seemingly on the run, desperate to get support from other countries for his war. (He) knows it will not happen, but (is) reassuring the Tamils that he is still a man to reckon with - which he is."

¶11. (C) COMMENT: The new message in this year's speech is that Prabhakaran is clearly disappointed with Norway and the SLMM, chastising them both for remaining passive in the face of increasing Sinhalese aggression. It is clear that he is ready for war, although this is couched in such terms that it does not seem, at first glance, belligerent. With this speech, Prabhakaran appears to have ruled out any peace moves for some time. By placing the blame on the international community, he reinforces his argument that there is no other option for Tamils but to continue the military struggle. Although largely directed at the international community, the

COLOMBO 00001601 003 OF 003

deceptively mild tone of the speech is likely to play well among Tamils in Sri Lanka and abroad. As a propaganda exercise, it will probably succeed in rallying support among Tamils in government-controlled areas of Sri Lanka and in the Diaspora to the Tiger cause.

MOORE